

CPC Public Hearing Minutes – January 19, 2009

The Community Preservation Committee held a Public Hearing at the Wellesley Town Hall on January 19th, 2009 at 7:00 PM.

Present were the following CPC members: Jack Morgan (Chair), Tony Parker (Vice Chair), Bob Goldkamp, Allan Port, Rose Mary Donahue, Stephen Murphy, and Joan Gaughan. Susan Minio, CPC administrative assistant was also present. Absent were Kara Cicchetti and Jim Conlin.

There were 10 members of the community present.

Jack Morgan called the Public Hearing of the CPC of Wellesley to order at 7:05 PM. The CPC members introduced themselves and started the meeting. Jack Morgan gave a brief overview on the CPC explaining funding sources, completed and still open projects, and the proposed projects to be put forth by the Committee at this year's Annual Town Meeting (ATM). In addition, he gave an overview of a few projects that won't likely be considered for this ATM but may be up for consideration next year. He also raised the possibility of an increase in the CPC surcharge and gave some statistics on CPC surcharges from the surrounding comparable communities.

At 7:30pm, the meeting was opened to the public for comment and questions.

Jack Morgan presented two comments that were submitted by email. The first was from Kim Mahoney suggesting that the CPC should not increase the surcharge until the Department of Revenue began vetting each project and assured that they qualified for CPC funding.

The second was from Salvatore DeFazio regarding the Belvedere/Abbott Road sign. Mr. DeFazio was present at the meeting and chose to speak. Mr. DeFazio brought Susan Close, co-owner of Hammersmiths Studio in Concord with her husband, a master blacksmith. All three elements of the sign need to be replaced. The estimated cost to refurbish the sign is \$6,000. The CPC has agreed to fund \$3,000 of the completed cost and Mr. DeFazio is requesting that the CPC reconsider fully funding the cost of the refurbishment and replacement of the sign. Jack Morgan acknowledged that the CPC will reconsider this at the January 27th meeting. In addition, Jack noted that he had recused himself from the discussion as he is a resident of Abbott Road. Joan Gaughan asked a question regarding the Abbott family and whether they would be interested in restoring the sign. Mr. DeFazio said that he is unaware of any remaining family. Tony Parker asked whether Mr. DeFazio had received written support from the neighborhood thus illustrating that there is possible town-wide interest vs a personal interest in restoring the sign. Rose Mary Donahue reemphasized this must to be a project of town-wide interest. Allan Port suggests Mr. DeFazio perhaps reach out to the community or consider widening the request to include other iron art around the community.

Mr. Bob Sechrest, a Town resident of Precinct E, added that the WHS gave a presentation in the Belvedere neighborhood and suggested that Mr. DeFazio consider adding a bronze plaque describing additional information about the neighborhood.

Mr. Sechrest chose to speak and expressed that he is apprehensive on increasing the CPC surcharge since the town has creeping taxation. For Fuller Brook, Mr. Sechrest felt the he would support the project as the CPC suggests with additions – but is enthusiastic in general. He also stated that they need to provide more information about funding of this project beyond the CPC. He would not want it to stop other good projects from being funded for the next 5 years.

Eric Delacoste, who is a candidate for a seat on the housing authority, chose to speak and asked whether the CPC has any sense on what the town appetite is for increasing the fund or whether Mr. Sechrest's sentiment was the general feeling? Jack Morgan noted that the CPC is seeking public input as well as input from a wide selection of Town officials in order to make this determination. For many people the question of whether SB90 is passed is a very important consideration. Stephen Murphy clarified that the discussions are still in the exploratory mode. An increase in the surcharge would require ATM approval and then a town-wide vote.

Bob Sechrest wanted it recognized that the Lower Falls Bridge is at the top of his priority list. Jack Morgan appreciated the comments and added that the land involved is controlled by the Selectmen and encouraged Mr. Sechrest to raise the issue with the Selectmen directly. Allan Port clarified that the request before the CPC is to create a temporary pathway, not the bridge itself, which is being funded by the Commonwealth's Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Mr. Salvatore DeFazio suggested that the potential park space at 27 Washington Street be called The Alexander Graham Bell Park.

Martin Padley, President of the Wellesley Historical Society (precinct B), raised the issue that the Wellesley Farms Railroad Station, a prior CPC project, is lacking a marker to explain its historical significance. Mr. Padley noted that sadly signage is lacking for most of Wellesley's historical sites.

Jack Morgan wanted it noted that last year the CPC funded a project for the restoration of the clock tower and its door. He wanted to investigate whether the hinges were created by the same blacksmith credited with the Belvedere/Abbot Road sign. Tony Parker suggested that the WHS and WHC together to do an inventory of the significant places in town and what should be preserved or noted as significant.

The public hearing was adjourned at 8:15 PM by unanimous vote.